



Second Chance Leasing Workgroup Minutes
May 23, 2024, 1:30PM – 3:00PM
Boone Electric Community Building and virtual via Zoom

Attendees: Mike Martin (AP COMO LLC), Scott Buis (Truman VA), Sarah Melchert (Frontier Property Management), Becca Jones (Voluntary Action Center (VAC)), Tionna Lawson (VAC), Daniel Crasnow (Central Missouri Community Action), Alice Leeper (Columbia Board of Realtors), Carmelita Wright (Salvation Army), Erika Buford (Powerhouse Community Development Corporation), Becky Thompson (City of Columbia – Housing and Neighborhood Services), D’Andre Thompson (City of Columbia), Joanne Nelson (Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD)), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD), Kerby Webb (BCCSD), Verna Laboy (BCCSD)

Meeting Objective: To hear from Director of the City of Columbia’s New Housing & Neighborhood Services Department, mission, vision, short/long term goals.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Verna opened the meeting welcoming all attendees and everyone introduced themselves.

2. Office of Housing and Neighborhood Services Director – Rebecca “Becky” Thompson

Becky provided a brief overview of her background and how her new department includes two divisions, Neighborhood Services and Housing Programs. The Office of Neighborhood Services oversees code enforcement, rental certificates, and coordinates neighborhood services. The Housing Programs division primarily administers Federal funding and internal assistance programs. The current goal is to review core functions and processes to consider what’s working and what’s not while looking for areas to simplify and increase efficiency. The department is exploring the development of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, with plans to identify a dedicated funding source outside of federal funding. It was noted that we all have a role to play in this, needing entities working together to solve the housing crisis in our community. Consideration of how a tiny home village and workforce housing communities could work in our community is also in progress.

a. Q & A

Workgroup conversation included various topics, including what they would like to see addressed from the department and providing suggestions/comments:

- Interest in further details of the Housing Trust Fund. Becky said all ideas are on the table currently.
- Challenges with clearing titles, including the impact on insurance, wondering about any assistance the City of Columbia might be able to provide.
- Pallet Housing is typically temporary housing, filling a similar role to Opportunity Campus, and noting more need for transitional and longer term housing solutions.
- Suggestions were made to bring back City of Columbia neighborhood programs that kept neighborhoods stabilized and neighbors engaged (Neighborhood Congress, Neighborhood Response Team, Crime Free Housing, and Neighborhood Watch Program).
- Workgroup efforts previously indicated interest in training as part of action steps to take and Verna asked the group to share more about specific ideas. Education to housing providers, including information about vouchers, fair housing training, and knowing what is out there was brought up





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in addition to interest in sharing success stories. Background about the progression of some aspects of the workgroup was briefly shared along with an example of an existing program.

- Emotional support animals and service animals.
- Challenges housing providers face with the intersection of regulation, including federal mandates, and property rights.
- Interest in the number of available programs and utilization rates. The City of Columbia First Time Homebuyers program and the program helping repair properties were mentioned.
- Federal Housing Administration (FHA) program to increase Black homeownership. Involvement by St. Louis and Bell Bank was brought up, with potential to explore further.
- Collaboration from City of Columbia and Boone County, with an update that someone has been hired for code enforcement in Boone County.
- Interest in a return to the Neighborhood Congress previously in place at the City of Columbia, potentially in partnership with the county.
- Challenges exist with trash in Boone County, with an interest in finding solutions and different ways to address issues. Housing provider examples of experiences were shared.
- A suggestion was made to notify Courts about Tenant Training Programs when cases come up on the eviction docket, with this potentially helping a judge decide “security level,” which may impact an individual’s ability to rent in the future. Becky plans to bring this up to judges. The potential to develop local alternatives with the courts pre-eviction was suggested.
- Ways to disseminate and find information, such as the Office of Neighborhood Services newsletter to housing providers, City of Columbia website, and social media were mentioned.
- Verna suggested it would be helpful to know what housing-related resources are currently available. Sharing a survey link for the workgroup to start compiling information was planned.

3. Closing

a. Partner Updates

Boone County Community Services Department reminded the workgroup of the upcoming Results-Based Accountability Training on June 7, 2024.

b. Comments and Questions

Verna posed a question asking, “What is the assignment for the workgroup going forward?”

c. Next Steps

- A survey link will be shared with the workgroup as a method to collect input from everyone about existing resources for the workgroup to discuss further at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 27, 2024, 1:30 – 3:00PM at Boone Electric Community Building

